



Briefing on women and work

Position of women in the labour market

The gender pay gap is an indicator of persistent inequality in the labour market, and the very different labour market experiences of women and men.

Pay gap in Scotland 2011	Mean	Median
Comparing women and men's full-time hourly rates of pay	10.7%	5.8%
Comparing women's part-time and men's full-time hourly rates of pay	32.1%	33.4%
Combined figure (all women/all men)	14.7%	15.8%

(Source: Annual Survey for Hours and Earnings (2011))

The pay gap is caused by a number of factors, including **occupational segregation**, **a lack of flexible working**, and **discrimination within pay systems**. The pay gap contributes to women and children's poverty. It is also a drag on economic growth, and its causes have negative effects on individual businesses.

The Women and Work Commission, reporting in 2006, estimated the cost of the causes of the pay gap to the UK economy at £23bn, or 2 per cent of GDP.

Occupational segregation

There are two kinds of occupational segregation, both of which are endemic across the Scottish labour market.

- Horizontal segregation clusters men and women into different types of education, training, and work.
 - Boys and girls, and young men and women, study different subjects at Higher level, at college, and at university. There is significant gender segregation within the Modern Apprenticeship programme.
 - Men are more commonly found in higher-paying science, technology, construction, manufacturing, and engineering jobs. Women are more likely to be found in the low-paid 'five Cs' of cleaning, catering, clerical, cashiering (retail), and caring work.

- Vertical segregation describes the distribution of women and men within organisations. Women are more likely to be found in the lower-paid, junior grades of almost every organisation. Conversely, men are much more likely to be found in the boardroom, and in senior management roles within public, private, and voluntary sector organisations.

The table below illustrates the distribution of female and male workers across a number of occupational sectors in Scotland.

Occupational group		
	% male (number)	% female (number)
Managers and senior officials	64 (213,900)	36 (121,900)
Professional occupations	54 (182,000)	45 (152,000)
Associate professional and technical	48 (175,500)	53 (194,000)
Administrative and secretarial	21 (57,300)	79 (221,500)
Skilled trades	92 (251,400)	8 (21,200)
Personal services	18 (39,800)	82 (186,200)
Sales and customer service	32 (65,600)	68 (140,800)
Process, plant and machine operatives	88 (157,000)	12 (21,100)
Elementary occupations	53 (152,000)	47(136,200)
All Scotland	52 (1,295,000)	48 (1,194,900)

(Source: adapted from Scottish Government Social Research (2010) Tackling Occupational Segregation a Review of Key Evidence and National Policies, pg 6)

Occupational segregation is a complex issue, rooted in stereotypical assumptions about men and women's work. In 2011, Close the Gap launched the **Be What You Want** campaign (www.bewhatyouwant.org.uk). This provided all primary and secondary schools in Scotland with posters, classroom materials, and online materials to enable discussion of 'men's jobs' and 'women's jobs', and encouraged young people to consider non-traditional occupations.

We also support employers to change their working practices to ensure that businesses benefit from women's talents and skills. There are some economic sectors in Scotland where gender segregation appears to be constraining growth. The recent Royal Society of Edinburgh study of women in science, technology,

engineering, and maths, reported that the Scottish economy could benefit by £170 million if women who studied science were enabled to pursue careers in science by changes to working arrangements. (Source: RSE, 2012)

Lack of flexible working

Although women comprise 48% of the Scottish workforce (Source: ONS), they still have primary responsibility for childcare and other domestic work. To balance work and life, many women seek employment that offers some degree of flexibility, whether in the form of flexitime arrangements, or specific shift patterns or part-time working that enables them to be at home at key times.

The recession has significantly increased the number of men who are under-employed; who are working part-time when they would prefer to work full-time. Women have historically, and are currently, under-employed in the sense that they are working below their skill level. Recent research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation¹ identified that the lack of a quality part-time recruitment market means that 80,000 women in London are employed on a salary below their skill level.

Women tend to secure part-time, job-share, or flexible working arrangements by negotiation with their current employers. In many sectors, and for most job roles, it is extremely rare for jobs to be advertised on a part-time basis. Women identify this as a barrier to progression and promotion, and to applying for jobs in specific fields for which they are skilled.

Close the Gap has spoken to hundreds of women employed in Scottish businesses. Many have told us:

- They are afraid of what will happen to their career path if they try to work part-time, or ask to work flexibly, because they see few role models at senior levels;
- They feel that part-time work is perceived negatively by their employers, with a few exceptions, and that part-time workers are seen as uncommitted, unambitious, and unproductive.

Some companies that Close the Gap has worked with have taken steps to enhance their flexible working offer, with the purpose of attracting and retaining talent, particularly women after they return from maternity leave.

Childcare

Access to good-quality, affordable childcare is essential to enable women to work outside the home. There is evidence that, because of other pressures on family budgets, including those caused by welfare reform, an increasing number of women

¹ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2012) *Building a Sustainable Quality Part-Time Recruitment Market* JRF: London

are dropping out of the labour market because childcare has become too expensive. A quarter of parents in severe poverty in the UK have given up work and a third have turned down a job mainly because of high childcare costs. (Source: Save the Children, 2011)

- Only a fifth (21 per cent) of Scottish local authorities report that they have enough childcare for working parents and only one in ten local authorities have enough childcare for parents who work outside normal office hours. Scottish local authorities also report that there is insufficient childcare for older children, families in rural areas and those with disabled children.
- Childcare costs for parents in Scotland are among the highest in Britain. The average cost of after-school childcare – at £48.55 per week – is higher than England and Wales. On average, parents in Scotland can expect to spend £101.49 per week for 25 hours of nursery care for a child under two years old. The same amount of nursery care for a child aged two or over costs an average of £94.52 per week.

(Source: “The Scottish Childcare Lottery” Children in Scotland and The Daycare Trust (2012))

Regulatory framework

All employers are required to comply with the provisions in the Equality Act (2010), which proscribes direct or indirect discrimination in pay on the grounds of sex.

A relatively small proportion of the gender pay gap is the result of unlawful discrimination on the part of employers, but many employers are oblivious to the fact that they may unintentionally be breaking the law. An equal pay review can give employers the confidence that their pay systems are fair. Close the Gap is currently surveying employers across Scotland to identify what actions they are taking to find and resolve pay gaps, and will publish this in advance of the Women’s Employment Summit in the autumn.

Public sector employers are the only employers who are required by law to take proactive steps to ensure pay equality. They must do this by meeting the specific duties of the public sector equality duty (PSED), which requires employers with 150 employees to publish their gender pay gap, and information about occupational segregation within their organisation.

Close the Gap supports public sector employers to meet the requirements of the duty with regard to gender and employment.

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